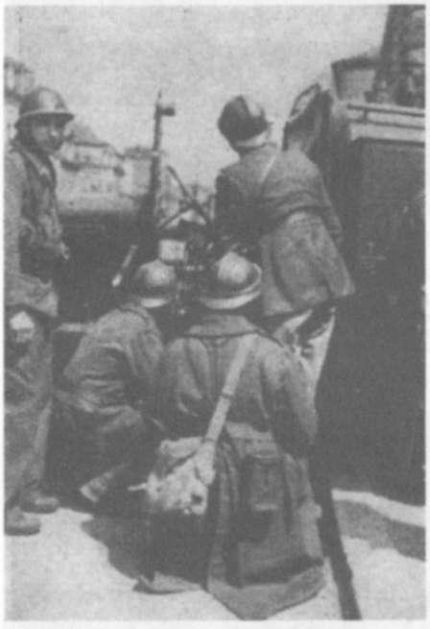
HITLER'S HALL-MARK ON A PEASANT HOME OF FRANCE

All the terrible tragedy of modern warfare is vividly portrayed by this photograph taken in a town some 20 miles from Paris. A little girl and her mother weep disconsolately amid the ruins of their home, after the Nazi bombers have passed. Hitler's great attack on the Low Countries was accompanied by a thrust against France, preceded by bombing raids on a number of French towns and villages. Many women and children were among the civilians killed or injured.

Photo, Keystone

First Days of 'Total War' on the Western Front

In these two photographs are shown scenes in Holland during the first few days of the German invasion. Left, in the streets of Amsterdam a Dutch soldier is examining the papers of passers-by during the round-up and internment of all the Germans in the city. Right, are barbed wire entanglements and tank barriers submerged by the waters of the River Yssel.



A mechanized unit of the French Army halted in a village of Luxemburg.

nize May 10 as one of the most amazing days in the whole panorama of history. Nothing was too fantastic to be performed by the Nazis in their attempt to capture Holland in the course of a few short hours. Mr. Van Kleffens, the Dutch Foreign Minister, when he arrived in England on May 11, said that the German parachutists descended on Holland like rain, many of them dressed in British, Dutch, Belgian and French uniforms. "Other Germans were hidden in river barges. Others were landed in seaplanes. They used the harbour bays and docks with great daring. Armed with heavy machine-guns they established themselves everywhere in fields and behind dykes." One of the first places to be seized by the Nazis was Rotterdam aerodrome, and the Dutch suffered many casualties before they were able to recapture this vital spot. Another detachment of parachutists had descended at Delft, four miles south of The Hague, charged with the desperate plan of cutting off the Dutch capital from the rest of Holland and of capturing the Queen and the Government. Here again the Dutch were fortunately able to muster sufficient force to put the parachutists out of action.

Many other parachute landings were reported throughout the day, and the wireless station at Hilversum was kept busy in informing the local authorities of the approach of Nazi 'planes believed to be carrying troops. All over Holland isolated detachments of the foe were doing their utmost to hamstring the Dutch advances and to weaken the morale of the Dutch people. In both these objects, however, they failed, for after the first shock of the invasion the traditional stubbornness of the Hollanders was abundantly manifested. "I saw them crying," said one English observer, "but they were tears of rage and not terror."

With undaunted courage the gendarmerie and police, aided by the regulars, mopped up the parachutists and destroyed the armed nests organized by German sympathizers. It was fortunate that the Dutch had been forewarned by the extent of a few hours, and had already arrested some of the potential Quislings—many persons whose names appeared on the letters of introduction with which the parachutists had been so considerately furnished at their depots.

How the battle was going at the front was revealed in a communiqué issued by the Dutch General Headquarters on the evening of May 10—the first communiqué, it may be noted, since Holland was last at war, in 1831. It announced that following the crossing of the frontier by German troops at several places at 3 a.m., Dutch frontier troops had blown up the bridges over the rivers Maas and Yssel. Aeroplane attacks on aerodromes had been made, but the army and navy were ready. Flooding, it continued, was being carried out according to plan.

An account of the opening day's fighting on the Belgian front was given by M. Pierlot, the Belgian Prime Minister, on a broadcast on the evening of Sunday, May 12. "On Friday," he said, "the enemy were not able to penetrate into our territory at any point on any considerable scale. Thorough demolitions were immediately carried out everywhere along the frontier, and checked the advance of the enemy."

On Saturday, however, went on the Premier, the enemy succeeded in crossing to the north of the Albert Canal.

The officer charged with the destruction of the two bridges next to Maastricht was killed by an aerial bomb. This caused a delay in carrying out the order, which was used by the enemy to occupy the two bridges and to cross them with motorized forces.

Later on, however, one of our officers penetrated into the German lines, reached the mine chambers, and blew himself up with the bridge, thus heroically sacrificing his life in the accomplishment of his duty.

These British soldiers are examining a German Heinkel brought down by their own anti-aircraft guns in Belgium. Besides fighter aircraft the columns of tanks and artillery of the British force in Belgium were accompanied by lorries carrying A.A. guns, and dotted along the roads there were more A.A. guns and observation posts, manned day and night.

Photos, Wide World, Keystone and British Official: Crown Copyright

On to the Meuse Swept the German Hordes

Thus the enemy had only one bridge left at his disposal. Across this they attacked our troops with an enormous mass of tanks and aircraft.

In spite of the fierce resistance they offered our troops had to withdraw as far as Tongres. In the afternoon we counter-attacked with our motorized forces and aircraft, but although severe losses were inflicted upon the enemy we could only succeed in retarding his advance.

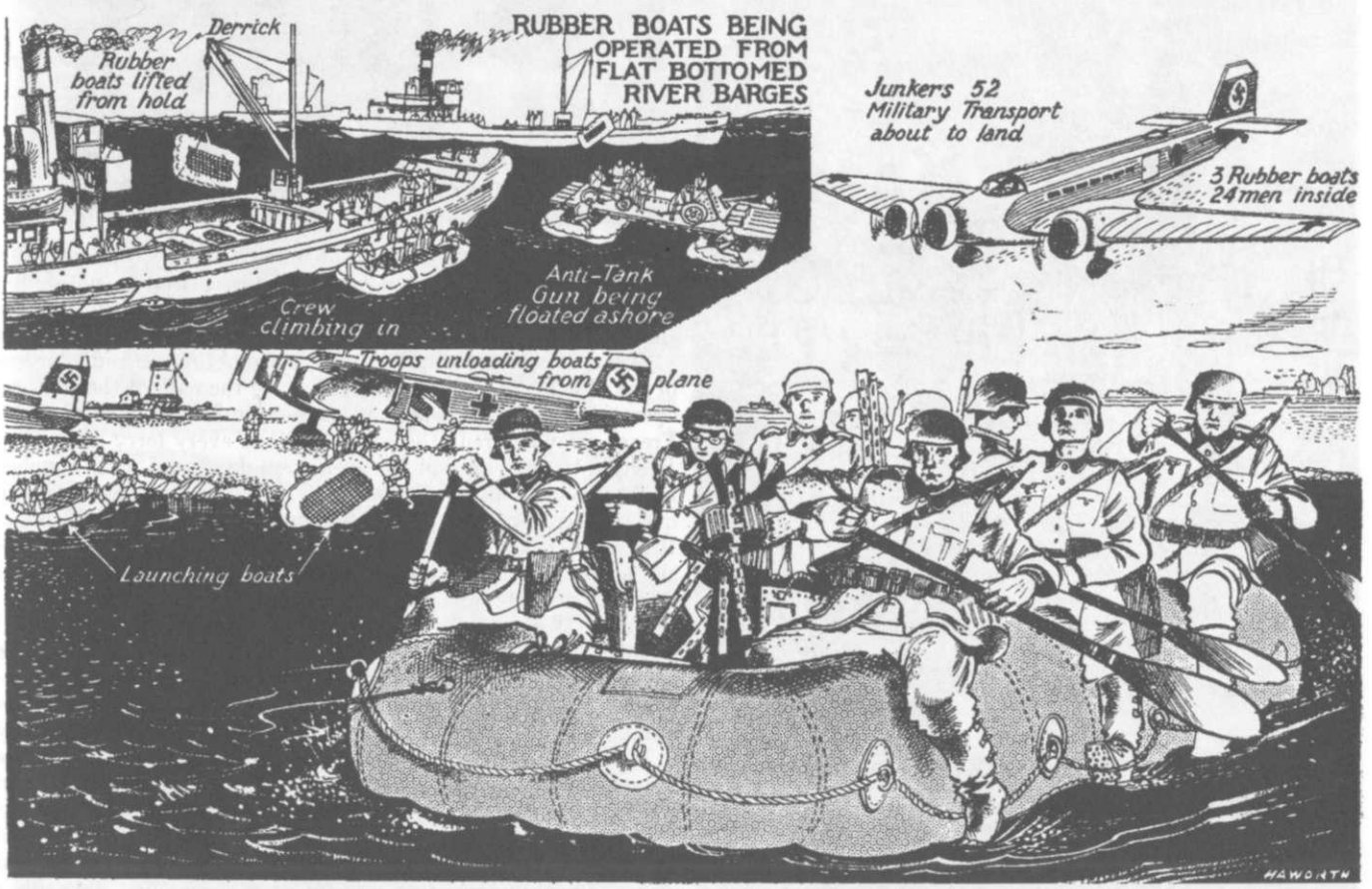
M. Pierlot went on to say that fierce enemy attacks were being delivered against the fortifications: "The glacis of these forts is covered with German corpses." He made no attempt at disguising the gravity of the situation, but he concluded with a note of calm resolution. "Be confident of victory," he said, "and with the help of our Allies we shall triumph."

"With the help of our Allies." For by now it had been revealed that the appeal to Britain for aid which had been made by Queen Wilhelmina and King Leopold in the early hours of May 10 had been answered within half an hour and that before the day was over a great stream of French and British soldiers was sweeping across the Belgian frontier to help the men of the Low Countries in combating the flood of Nazi invasion.

[*The story of the forced capitulation appears in page* 548].

The Waalhaven civil aerodrome, four miles south of Rotterdam, was taken by the Germans at an early stage of the fight for the city. It was re-captured and lost again. And in attacking the enemy forces stationed there it was considerably damaged by R.A.F. bombers, as the aerial photograph above shows. Only the smouldering framework of three of the hangars remains.

Photo, British Official: Crown Copyright


RUBBER BOATS BEING OPERATED FROM FLAT BOTTOMED RIVER BARGES
Derrick
Rubber boats lifted from hold
Crew climbing in
Anti-Tank Gun being floated ashore
Junkers 52 Military Transport about to land
3 Rubber boats 24 men inside
Troops unloading boats from plane
Launching boats
HAWORTH

On Friday, May 10, the Germans crossed the River Maas by means of rubber boats. Junkers 52 military transport 'planes swooped down on to the river bank each carrying three inflated rubber boats and about 24 soldiers. As the aircraft came to rest the soldiers jumped out, unloaded the boats, and carried them to the river, where they launched them and paddled across to the opposite bank.

The Germans have experimented with rubber boats since 1936, and quite recently, as shown in the inset drawing, they were rehearsing the launching of such craft from shallow-draught river barges which could safely operate close to a mine-infested coast. On two boats lashed together to form a raft, comparatively heavy loads, such as guns, can be transported.

'Gort's Men' Speed to Aid the Belgians

Strict in her interpretation of neutrality, Belgium had permitted no preliminary consultations between her generals and the Allied High Command. Nevertheless, the latter had prepared plans for the eventuality of the little country's invasion, and so the B.E.F. wasted no time in proceeding to her succour.

MANY a British Army has marched into Belgium—red-coats and men in khaki, the veterans of Marlborough and Wellington, French, Plumer and Haig. But the British Army which crossed the frontier from France on Friday, May 10, had left far behind the days of foot-slogging and foot-sore infantry. Gort's men sped over the long, straight roads in roaring tanks and armoured cars, in mile upon mile of rumbling motor-lorries.

For eight months this great force had been encamped within a few miles of the frontier ready to counter just such a desperate lightning stroke as Hitler had now delivered. All through those eight months the men had looked across into the Belgian fields and villages where only a short generation before their fathers had marched to ultimate victory. To cross that line had meant internment, but now it was obliterated. With the Germans thundering at his eastern gates, King Leopold appealed to his father's ally for succour in Belgium's hour of tremendous danger. Within thirty minutes of that appeal the first British and French 'planes had flown into Belgium to make combat with the hordes of Nazi bombers. Within a few hours the men of the ground forces followed in their wake.

The frontier barriers were still in position when the vanguard of the British troops appeared in sight, but it was the work of a few moments to thrust them aside or even in some places to uproot them in a joyous frenzy of new-found fraternity. As the first detachment crossed the frontier saluted by the customs officers and gendarmerie, a sergeant yelled out to his platoon seated beside him in the motor-lorry, "Now we're in, boys!" and to the Belgian girls who lined the footpath they shouted the inquiry, "Which way to Berlin?"

Early in the morning of May 10 men of the B.E.F. crossed the frontier into Belgium. Here they are seen actually marching past the customs sign (top right). Mechanized troops also sped along the stone highways, and at midday the Tommies were grateful for refreshing drinks offered them by thoughtful Belgian girls (right).

Through many a town and village with names familiar to British ex-Service men roared the tanks and motor transports of the 1940 B.E.F. And once more the Belgian citizens came out to welcome our men into their country.

Photos, British Official: Crown Copyright

"Leading elements of the B.E.F., in co-operation with the French army, entered Belgium today," announced a communiqué issued by the British G.H.Q. on the evening of that first day of real war on the Western Front. "They were accorded a great welcome by the Belgian population."

Wild enthusiasm, indeed, made the progress of the British one long triumphant procession. At the first Belgian village the inhabitants ran out with mugs of beer, which they offered to the soldiers; the older amongst the peasants no doubt remembered that the British soldier always had a thirst! Belgian girls tore sprigs of lilac from the roadside bushes and flung them in the path of the advancing cavalcade or rushed to hand them to the soldiers. Soon every lorry and many of the men were decorated with bunches of lilac, and the sinister shapes of the tanks and anti-aircraft guns were made gay with bunches of tulips, posies of lily-of-the-valley and trailing strands of creeper.

"The Belgians have been wonderful to us all along the route," one of the drivers told Paul Bewsher, special correspondent of the "Sunday Dispatch," on Saturday. "Early this morning they brought out jugs of hot coffee which we gulped down as we stopped for a few minutes. The bakers brought us packets full of cakes and buns. At other places they gave us toffee and chocolates, and just outside this town they gave us a glass of beer. Though we have been on the road since late last night with no stop for a meal, it has not been at all bad."

Once Again the Allies Go to War in Belgium

Above, a British Army lorry entering a Belgian town. A particularly warm welcome was given by children to the British tanks, one of which is seen below. In order to clear the roads for the advancing British forces such obstacles as those at the right had to be removed.

When the British marched into Belgium the Tommies received an almost embarrassing tribute of floral offerings (left). Side by side with the guns might be seen lorries, such as that above, carrying pathetic loads of refugees.

The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg was entirely defenceless, all her fortifications having been demolished long ago, while her army of 200 men was for ceremonial purposes only. These Luxembourgers are watching French tanks in a small town after the Nazi invasion had begun.

Photos, British Official: Crown Copyright, and Keystone

Parachute Troops Bring War From the Skies

In the opening days of " total war " on the Western Front the Nazis made great use of their parachute troops. Some account of these well-armed desperadoes, who created much confusion and havoc behind the lines in Holland, is given here.

FROM just before dawn on May 10 the sky above the Low Countries was often filled with black blobs dangling from silvery parachutes dropping slowly into woods and fields far behind the zone of the fiercest fighting.

News of their approach kept the Dutch radio fully occupied. " Waves of German parachutists are coming over," said Hilversum; " keep a sharp look out for them "; and from Brussels there came similar warnings. Dropped from flights of three to five machines, the parachutists descended close to the principal strategic centres and the most vital aerodromes—to mention but a few, near Delft, only 13 miles from The Hague; at Waalhaven, Rotterdam's principal airport, where they joined hands with German troops who had been landed from transports and flying-boats; Dordrecht; Gouda, near Amsterdam; and Hooge Zwaluwe, where is the Moerdyk. Bridge forming the principal link between the provinces of North Holland and North Brabant.

Most of these soldiers of the sky were at once engaged by the Dutch police, gendarmerie and military, and were sooner or later killed or captured; in some places, however, particularly in the neighbourhood of Rotterdam, they were able to establish themselves for the time being, and at The Hague they were within an ace, it would seem of succeeding in what only a short time before would have been regarded as a fantastic project—the seizure of the Dutch sovereign and the Netherlands Government.

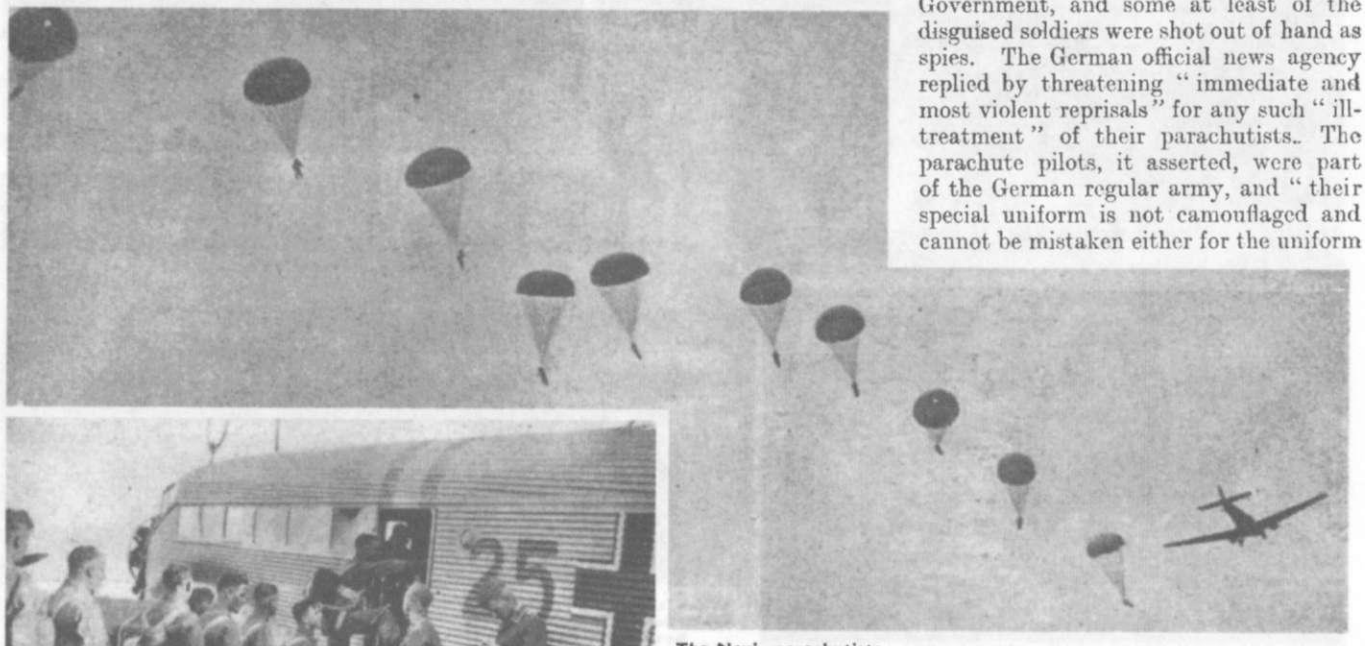
Armed with machine-guns or mortars and pistols, and equipped with steel helmets, gas masks, binoculars, portable wireless sets, explosives, tents, and folding bicycles—these air-borne arsenals silently dropped to earth, and if their advent had been undetected, crept away through the grass or trees on their nefarious missions. Some kept a sharp look out for Dutch military movements and at once used their wireless sets to transmit the information they had gathered to their headquarters behind the German lines, or conveyed it to the dwelling of a traitorous Dutch Nazi or German spy. Some set about the blowing-up of bridges and railways and the destruction of telegraph lines, while others with machine-guns strove to prevent the demolition by the Dutch of their dykes and bridgeheads.

Such work calls for military qualities of a high order, and these Nazi storm troops of 1940 pattern were picked men, resolute to do or die in their allotted tasks. It is true that the Dutch reported the discovery of the corpses of several parachutists who had obviously been shot in the back—presumably by their officers in the 'plane when they had displayed an undue reluctance to take the drop into space. These must have been the exceptions, however, judging from the amount of damage which the parachutists were able to effect. Quite apart from this material havoc there was what may be described as their " nuisance value " and their influence on the morale of a people even so phlegmatically resolute as the Dutch.

In many cases, it was alleged, the parachutists were disguised in Dutch uniforms or in the uniforms of British or French troops. Moreover, there were well-authenticated reports of them having landed dressed as clergymen, peasants, and even as women and girls. So disguised, their passage through the countryside may well have been facilitated, so that they were enabled to approach their objectives without arousing suspicion.

Such a breach of military usage was indignantly denounced by the Dutch Government, and some at least of the disguised soldiers were shot out of hand as spies. The German official news agency replied by threatening " immediate and most violent reprisals " for any such " ill-treatment " of their parachutists. The parachute pilots, it asserted, were part of the German regular army, and " their special uniform is not camouflaged and cannot be mistaken either for the uniform of foreign armies or civilian clothes." For every parachutist so " ill-treated " they would shoot ten prisoners. " The young German army is proud of its parachute pilots."

Not only in Holland did the parachutists present a constant threat, but in Belgium and even in little Luxemburg—which, indeed, was captured in the course of a few hours by parachute troops. While the Dutch and Belgian soldiers, aided by their French and British allies, were valiantly resisting the Nazi hordes in the battle zone along the Eastern frontier, for scores of miles behind them in the very heart of the countries they were defending, the parachute troops of the enemy were doing their utmost to stab the defenders in the back.



The Nazi parachutists used in Holland and Belgium, were men hand-picked for fitness and subjected to a long and arduous training. Here some are seen entering a Junkers JU25 for a practice jump, while above they are drifting to earth.
Photos, Keystone and Wide World

'Kultur' Comes Again This Side the Rhine

Left, the gap made by a direct hit from a Nazi bomber on a house in Brussels. The windows of adjoining buildings are shattered. Right, a column of smoke ascends from a block of flats badly damaged by a bomb.

In the photograph above and in the two below, left and right, is seen some of the damage done by Nazi bombers during their ruthless attacks on defenceless French and Belgian villages.

ONCE more, with complete disregard for the laws of warfare and for common humanity, Nazi 'planes have bombed open towns and villages in France and Belgium. The photographs in this page give some slight idea of the damage done. The attack on Brussels took place soon after German troops had crossed the frontier, several houses being destroyed and a number of people killed and injured. At the same time waves of bombers passed over central, north, and north-eastern France, doing extensive damage and causing many casualties.

Above is a ruined house in the little town of Méry-sur-Oise, only 20 miles north of Paris, on which a bomb was dropped on May 10. The owner was killed, but his wife and children escaped without injury.

Nancy was one of the places attacked by Nazi bombers on May 10, 1940, and though it is a garrison town the chief sufferers were civilians. Left, a casualty is being dealt with by a rescue party, and right is some of the damage done by high-explosive bombs. Soldiers are helping to clear away the ruins. There were two raids, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, and during the earlier one eight people were killed.

Photos, British Official: Crown Copyright, Associated Press, Planet News, Wide World and British Movietone News

Nazi Bombs Fall on Holland's Greatest City

During the raid on Amsterdam a bomb fell in the Heerengracht Canal, with the result shown here. On the right is a dust-cart with bodies of victims and on the pavement a dead dog.

Another view of the destruction along the Heerengracht. The canal embankment was destroyed, and trees were snapped in two. Houses were utterly demolished.

Photos, exclusive to THE WAR ILLUSTRATED

Above, the Amsterdam Voluntary Air Defence Service at work. Note the absence of protective clothing. Below a civilian, wounded severely gazes in horror at the body of his little daughter.

Exclusive Photos of the Raids on Amsterdam

A few minutes after a bomb had hit this house, a member of the Voluntary Air Defence was on the spot (above). The next people to arrive were the police and burghers, who immediately organized a search of the wreckage for trapped victims (left).

These first photographs of the air bombardment of Amsterdam tell their own grim story. Wounded people lay in the streets round the scenes of wreckage. The blast of the explosions had shattered the windows of neighbouring houses, and women rushed screaming into the streets. In this photograph the police (in black helmets) are seen going to the assistance of distracted civilians near the Heerengracht Canal.

Photos, exclusive to THE WAR ILLUSTRATED

Holland Overwhelmed in a Five-Days Campaign

War broke on Holland shortly before dawn on Friday, May 10, and by the evening of the following Tuesday, May 14, the Dutch Commander-in-Chief had decided that further resistance was useless and the "Cease Fire" was sounded. Germany's war machine, so long prepared and employed with such ruthless efficiency, had destroyed the independence of yet another of the countries of Europe.

WHEN the avalanche of fire and steel swept over the Dutch frontier from Germany shortly before dawn on Friday, May 10, the advanced troops of the Netherlands Army gradually retired according to pre-arranged plan. Their task was to hinder, not to hold positions which it was generally agreed were militarily indefensible. So, fighting with that stubborn tenacity which has ever characterized their race, the Dutch machine-gunners and riflemen withdrew to the first line of defence just in front of the rivers Yssel and Maas.

The Germans were hot in pursuit with forces far superior in number and far better supplied with guns, and by nightfall the battle was joined along the two rivers, while the German parachutists who had been landed from 'planes and transports were converting the interior of Holland into a welter of confused battle. That night the Germans, having overrun the "Maastricht Appendix," made the passage of the Maas and entered the town itself. Shortly afterwards, owing to one of the two bridges having escaped destruction by the defenders, they crossed the Albert Canal and so gained a foothold in the Belgian defensive positions.

This same day (Saturday) the Germans managed to effect the crossing of the Yssel below Arnhem, while their troops, landed by air and from the sea in the vicinity of Rotterdam, continued in a determined effort to capture that great centre of Dutch commercial life. The Dutch seemed, however, to have the position well in hand, and General Winkelman, the Commander-in-Chief, declared in an order of the day issued that night to his troops that "the German invasion of Holland has been a failure, and the German High Command has made a profound mistake in underrating the Dutch Army."

Already, however, the situation had taken a turn for the worse. By Sunday morning the Germans had crossed the Yssel and Maas in several places, and the Dutch, after destroying as many bridges as possible, were withdrawing to their "waterline"—the flooded area in front of what is called "fortress Holland," the triangle formed by the three cities of Amsterdam, Utrecht and Rotterdam. Practically the whole of northern Holland had been overrun by the invaders, who had made their appearance on the eastern shore of the Zuyder Zee and from Harlingen were threatening the great dam which connects Friesland with the province of North Holland. Far more serious was the German advance westward from Nymegen, which had the effect of cutting off the main Dutch forces from those operating in the south of Holland, and, of course, the Belgians and their Franco-British Allies.

So black was the outlook on the Monday morning (May 13) that no surprise was caused by the announcement that Princess Juliana and, later, Queen Wilhelmina, had taken refuge in England. Soon they were followed by the Dutch Government, which had found it impossible to function in a country involved in total war. By now the German advance through North Brabant has become a rush; their armoured cars had appeared at Langstraat, and they had taken by treachery the vital Moerdyk Bridge which crosses the Hollandische Diep connecting North Brabant with South Holland, the very heart of the country. The Germans claimed, indeed, that their advanced detachments had made contact with the German troops fighting in Rotterdam.

Twenty-four hours later Gen. Winkelman announced that Dem Halder, the northern point of the province of North Holland and a main military base, was still in Dutch hands, and, so, too was Rotterdam; the position in Brabant was uncertain, but Zeeland was still held.

It was now Tuesday afternoon, and the situation was grave in the extreme. "Fortress Holland" was almost surrounded, and was being attacked simultaneously from land, sea and air. Rotterdam was bombed furiously in the course of the afternoon, and Utrecht was threatened with similar destruction; both cities surrendered a few hours later. It was hardly surprising, then, that early in the evening Gen. Winkelman ordered his troops to cease fighting, and by 7 p.m. the order had been obeyed.

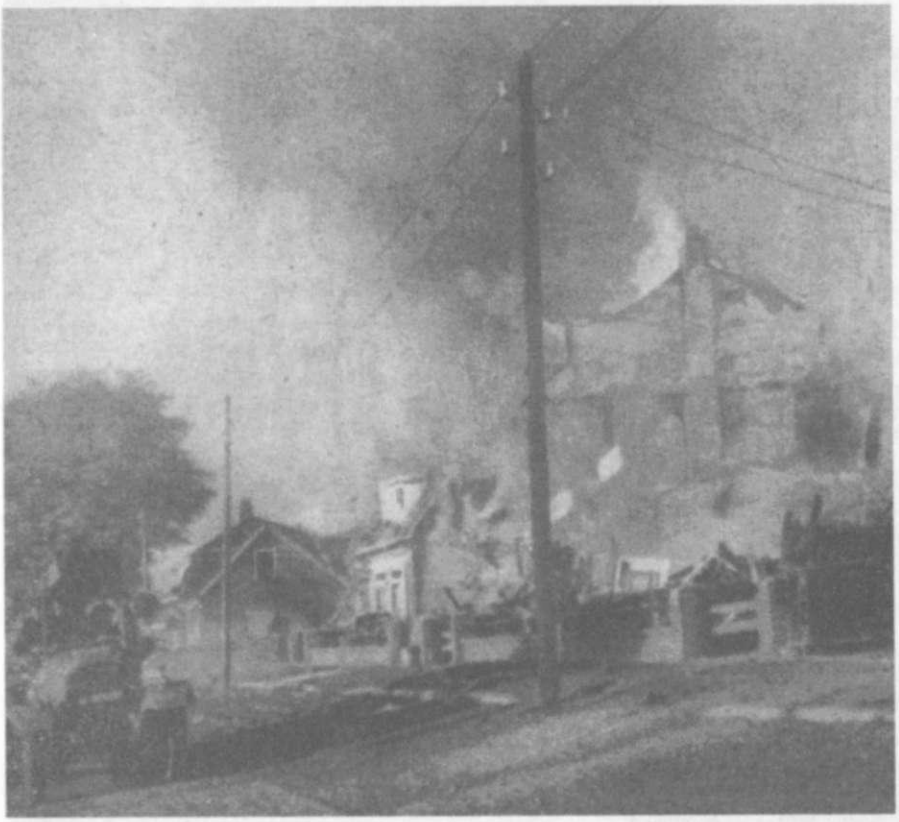
At 1 o'clock in the morning of May 14 the Netherlands Legation in London announced the news.

The Commander-in-Chief of the Netherlands Army has issued a proclamation to the troops concerned that fighting is to cease.

Enemy troops in great numbers have succeeded in crossing the Moerdyk Bridge and in retaking Rotterdam, which had been previously heavily bombarded. Consequently the heart of the country was laid open to the enemy and the main forces of the army behind the Dutch waterline were threatened by immediate enemy attacks on their rear.

Under these circumstances, and to avoid complete destruction of the country, the C.-in.C. was of the opinion that further resistance had become useless and therefore was to be abandoned.

So Holland's five-day campaign ended.



Here is the scene near the Schiphol aerodrome, seven miles from Amsterdam, in the early hours of May 10, when it was heavily bombed just after Hitler had taken Holland under his "protection." A house has been struck by a bomb, and A.R.P. men dash up to the rescue. Behind the cloud of smoke rising from the bombs Dutch fighter 'planes are no doubt trying to beat off the bombers.
Photo, Associated Press

Switzerland Stands-To on Her Mountain Bulwarks

Norway, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, Luxemburg—in little more than a month five of the dwindling number of Europe's neutral States were engulfed in the war. No wonder, then, that in May, Switzerland mobilized once again and made ready to meet any onslaught.

As soon as news of the German invasion of the Low Countries was telephoned to Berne, the Swiss Government gave the order for general mobilization to be completed by 9 a.m. on the following day—Saturday, May 11. This step, it was announced, had been taken on the representations of Gen. Guisan, Commander-in-Chief of the Swiss forces, "because of the far-reaching change in conditions on the Western Front, in order to be ready for every eventuality, and so as to meet every threat from whatever side it may come, in accordance with the Confederation's spirit of absolute neutrality."

"Our country has been spared for the moment," said the President of the Swiss Confederation, Dr. Pilet-Golaz, in a proclamation to his people, "but the position created by the new development is serious. It is no longer the moment for discussion or hesitation. We must be determined and act."

Without a hitch or a murmur the mobilization proceeded, and was completed to time. In large measure, indeed, Switzerland was already mobilized, for since September 2, 1939, the last occasion on which general mobilization had been ordered, a large number of troops—some said as many as 350,000 or 400,000 men—had been kept with the colours. The regiments in the town depots, the anti-aircraft battalions, and the garrisons of the frontier forts were now all brought up to full strength.

Switzerland's army is a national militia, in which all male citizens from 20 to 48 have their place—from 20 to 32 in the Auszug or Elite, from 33 to 40 in the Landwehr, and for the last eight years in the Landsturm. When general mobilization was ordered, then, a very large proportion of the nation's manhood joined up forthwith. Middle-aged men and youngsters, fathers and sons, took up the rifle and cartridges and military kit kept in readiness in a corner of their homes and marched together to the mobilization centres—some of them in the big towns of the central plain, others high up in the Alpine passes in the region of eternal snow.

Country of Many Frontiers

There some received their instructions in French, others in German, or rather Schwyzer-Deutsch, others in Italian or perhaps Romansch. With a minimum of fuss nearly 600,000 men were soon standing on the defensive.

For Switzerland has several frontiers to watch, though not so many to defend. Against France she has had to take few precautions—none indeed save those which have been inspired by her desire to stand well with the Nazi authorities, who protested angrily against the forts which the Swiss engineers were constructing on the old Austrian frontier while that in the Jura over against France was left almost unfortified. Not only the German frontier but the Italian has been of late years rendered as impregnable as military engineers, aided powerfully by peak and precipice, could make it.

These defensive measures, together with many other military precautions—A.R.P. arrangements, for instance, black-out regulations, plans for the evacuation of civilians, and the accumulation of foodstuff—have been made necessary by the dangerous situation in which Switzerland found herself following the gradual unfolding of the Nazi designs of aggression. That Switzerland is altogether inoffensive, that her people are essentially peaceloving, that she has not been engaged in a foreign war for much more than a century, that within her bounds men of different races, speaking different languages, and practising with ardent sincerity different religious faiths, live in fruitful amity—all these constitute no defence against the aggressor to the east and north: rather they offer an invitation for him to launch his tanks and warplanes against her.

Ever since the war began Switzerland has been strengthening her frontier fortifications, making full use of experience gained by builders of the Maginot and Siegfried systems. Top right, a sentry on duty in a tank barrier and, below, an anti-tank gun emplacement. *Photos, Wide World*

Of late months there have been many indications of the existence of a plan for the Nazi invasion of Switzerland. According to one report the invasion would take place when France and Britain were not only deeply involved in Scandinavia and south-east Europe, but were striving to counter a fierce Nazi thrust at the Low Countries. Suddenly a great German army would attack from the direction of Constance in the north-east, and hack its way through the centre of the country, past Zurich, Lucerne, and Berne, to enter France across the Jura mountains and so take the defences of the Maginot Line in the rear. In this project, so it was said, the Germans would be supported by an Italian army advancing through the Bernina and Splugen passes to the seizure of the Italian-speaking cantons.

Dutch and Belgian Lines of Resistance Against the Invasion

They March under Leopold to the Battle

The invasion of Belgium was only a few hours old when it was made clear that the Belgian Army which had taken the field under King Leopold might be relied upon to live up to the great traditions of that captained by his heroic father, King Albert, from 1914 to 1918. Below some details of the present Belgian Army are given.

WHEN the Kaiser's legions fell upon "gallant little Belgium" in the August of 1914, they were opposed by an army rich in bravery but poor in all those things without which modern battles cannot be won. The soldiers who defended the forts of Liége for eleven terrible days, who struggled back from Antwerp to join their king in the water-soaked remnant of their country about Furnes, were all of them ragged, many or most of them without sufficient guns and ammunition.

Very different was the army which was so suddenly put to the test on May 10, 1940. Its fire-power was beyond comparison with that of 1914 or even 1918; the troops were provided with modern armaments claimed to be the best in existence, weapons which are Belgian in construction and manufacture. Moreover, the working of the principle of universal service had been perfected, with the result that it was possible even before Belgium herself was involved in the conflict to call 650,000 men to the colours—out of a population, be it remembered, of only some 8,000,000.

According to the military law passed in 1937 the ranks of the Belgian army are filled by an annual contingent of conscripts, supplemented by voluntary enlistments. Volunteers enlist for periods of from three to five years; the period of service of the annual contingent of conscripts is 17 months for 60 per cent of the intake and 12 months for the remainder. The liability to military service extends over 25 years—15 years in the regular army and reserve and 10 years in the territorial army.

For the purposes of military organization Belgium is divided into four areas. No. I consists of West and East Flanders and Hainaut; No. II of Antwerp and Limburg; No. III of Liége, Namur and Luxembourg; and No. IV of Brabant. There are a Staff College, and a school for training regimental officers at Brussels and a Cadet School at Namur. Non-commissioned officers are trained at Bouillon and St. Trond for French and Flemish-speaking soldiers respectively. Then there are, of course, schools for specialized training in the various branches of the military art.

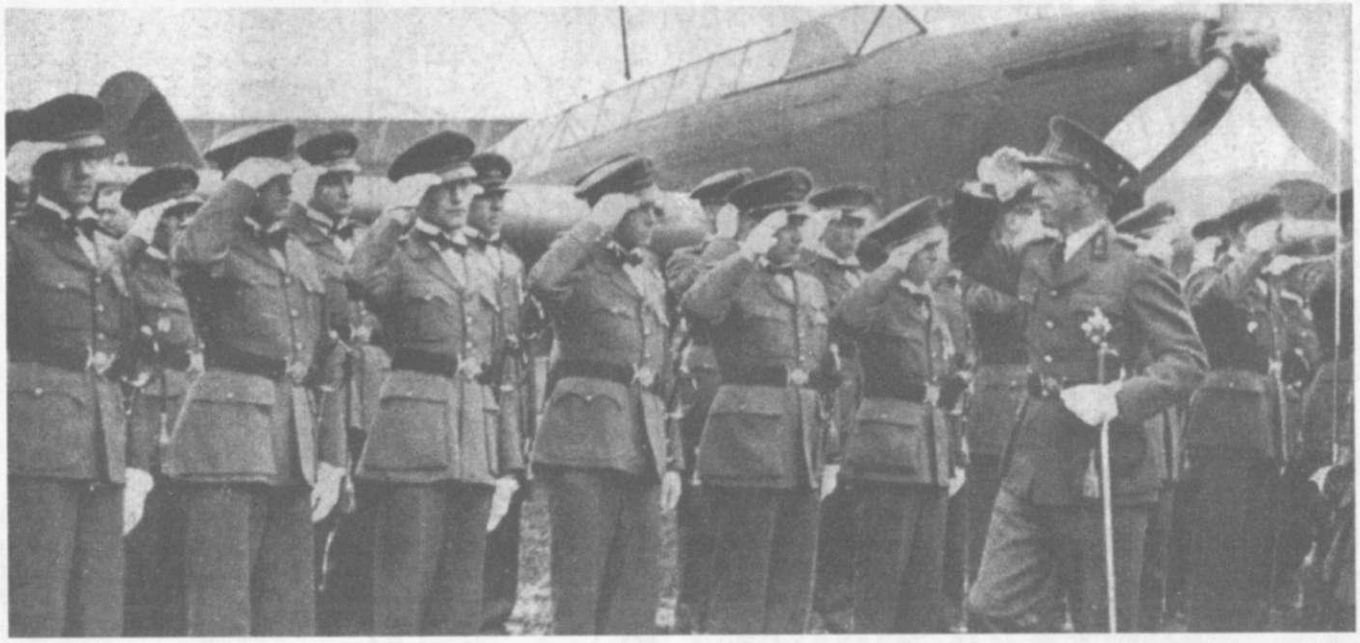
How the Army is Organized

In 1939 the strength of the army in Belgium was 4,800 officers and 88,000 other ranks—made up of 55,000 conscripts and 33,000 long-service soldiers—organized in three infantry and one mechanized cavalry army corps. The infantry make up seven divisions, consisting of 22 regiments; there are two divisions of mechanized cavalry comprising eight regiments, two of which are cyclist. As regards artillery, there were before the war 91 batteries of field artillery and 12 of heavy artillery. There is also a division of special frontier troops, and last December the formation was announced of a Marine Corps charged with the patrol and protection of the coast.

As mentioned above, shortly after the present war began Belgium mobilized 650,000 men, and it may be anticipated that she has put an even larger number into the field in the course of the present campaign.

By way of comparison the position in 1914 may be stated. Parliament, the year before, had authorized a scheme that would yield eventually 340,000 men, but on the outbreak of war only 230,000 were available, of whom 60,000 were fortress troops. One cavalry and six other divisions composed the field army, for which no reserve drafts existed.

In time of peace the head of the Belgian army is the Minister of Defence—the present holder of this office is Lieut.-Gen. Henri Denis—but in time of war the Army is commanded by the king in person. King Leopold announced in a proclamation of September 4, 1939, however, that he had taken over the command of the army, even though at that time his country was not actually involved in hostilities. During the crisis of January, 1940, when not only was the Belgian army fully mobilized but the frontier districts, particularly in the Eupen-Malmédy area, had been evacuated of their civilian population, he set up an army headquarters; and as soon as the German troops crossed the Belgian frontier in the early hours of May 10 he went to the front and assumed effective control of his country's defence forces. Under him as Chief of Staff, is Major-Gen. Michiels, who succeeded Lieut.-Gen. Van den Bergen on February 1 last.



The King of the Belgians, besides being in supreme command of the Army, is the head of the Belgian Air Force. His Majesty is here seen at the Evère Aerodrome, Brussels, inspecting some of the Belgian airmen who since the invasion of their country have given such a good account of themselves. The attempt of the Nazis to destroy the Belgian Air Force by bombing the aerodromes was anticipated and frustrated by removing the 'planes in advance. *Photo, Keystone*

The Belgian Army Made Ready for the Invader

For months before the threat of invasion became a hideous fact the Belgian troops on the German frontier were on the alert against enemy surprise and were constantly exercised in wartime duties. Here, in front-line concrete emplacements, anti-aircraft gunners at the call of the bugler run to take up their action stations.

These Belgian machine-gunners in a carefully camouflaged post are on outpost duty. When an enemy advance in large numbers develops they fall back to the main body.

At the artillery training school at Lombartzyde, near Ostend, recruits for the Belgian artillery and anti-aircraft services have been trained, and an intensive course enabled them to become proficient very quickly. Left, young recruits are learning the use of the telemeter, the wonderful instrument that, in conjunction with the predictor, gives, with very slight adjustments by the user, the speed, height and distance away of an aeroplane for the information of the gunners. Right is one of Belgium's very first lines of defence, a remarkably elaborate steel anti-tank barrage.

Photos, Fox, Sport & General, Keystone

The Epic Stories of the Glosters on the Frozen Lake

Local aerial preponderance made possible the rapid German advance that caused the British withdrawal from Central Norway. In default of airfields and landing grounds, the Royal Air Force had to fly from Britain for each operation. Eventually a fighter squadron gained a foothold, and its splendid story is here told.

Owing to the lack of airfields and landing grounds available to the Allies in Norway it fell to the Fleet Air Arm of the Royal Navy to do much of the aerial work involved. "It is difficult to speak without emotion of the pluck and endurance of the young officers and men," said one of the officers of an aircraft carrier. He went on to explain that some of the Air Arm officers were midshipmen; all were undergoing their baptism of fire, and none had dropped a bomb or torpedo except at a practice range, or had fired a machine-gun otherwise than at a target.

One young pilot had the starboard wing of his 'plane badly holed by a shell and his gunner wounded; nevertheless, he brought back his craft safely to the carrier under very difficult weather conditions. Another British aeroplane had half its undercarriage shot away. The pilot got back and circled over the aircraft carrier whilst the rest of the flight landed; he was unwilling to land earlier lest his damaged machine should encumber the flight deck. Only when all had got down safely did he attempt to land his crippled aeroplane; by this time it was almost dark and his petrol had nearly all gone; moreover, the aircraft carrier was pitching badly. Yet, by a magnificent piece of work, he made a safe landing.

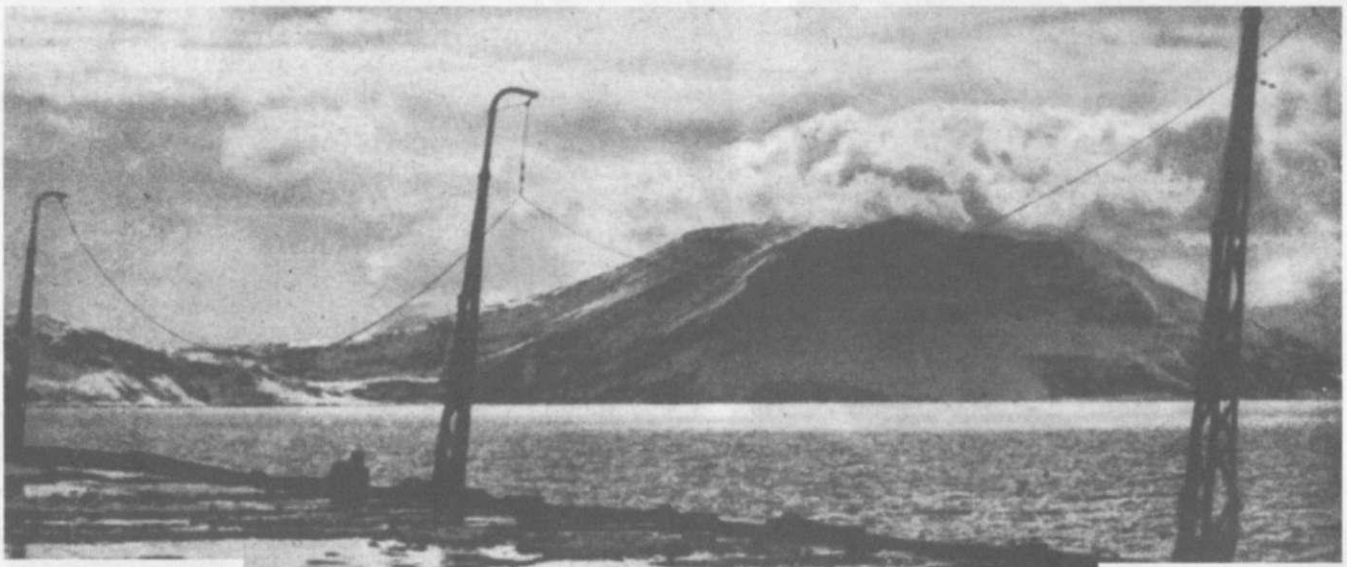
Another story of heroic endeavour and magnificent courage was disclosed by the Air Minister's speech in Parliament on May 8. Brought from a British port on an aircraft carrier, a squadron of Gloster Gladiators was flown in a blinding snowstorm over 180 miles of the North Sea and landed on the surface of a frozen lake at Leskesjogen, 40 miles S.W. of Aandalsnes. From this improvized aerodrome the first patrol took off at 10 p.m. that day. Early next morning the Germans attacked. Something like 80 German bombers took part, and they were continuously over the lake for about 15 hours. Tons of high explosive bombs were dropped. There were 37 combats; six German machines were brought down close to the lake and another eight near by. In all 30 German aircraft were put out of action.

When more details became known a fuller picture of the epic of the frozen lake could be obtained. The Gladiators were escorted to Leskesjogen by machines of the Fleet Air Arm. Next morning at 4 a.m. three R.A.F. machines engaged and shot down a Heinkel. From 7 a.m. until 8 p.m. the enemy made continuous attacks on the landing ground, which, except for a runway, was covered with snowdrifts several feet deep.

All the while our pilots remained out in the open; as fast as they had landed from one encounter they took off again. One by one their aircraft were destroyed and the pilots were severely burned in some cases. But they assisted to get the remaining aircraft up into the air. All this time they were being machine-gunned from German aeroplanes. At last, when no longer able to fly, they fought back from the ground with a machine-gun. Towards the end of the day ammunition gave out, but the pilots, undaunted, went up and made feint attacks to disconcert the enemy. One pilot saved his machine by repeatedly attempting to collide with three fighters attacking him; they swerved away and he was able to land. His machine had been struck by cannon shells, and as he walked away it was set on fire. At the end of this first day only five out of the squadron of 18 Gladiators were serviceable.

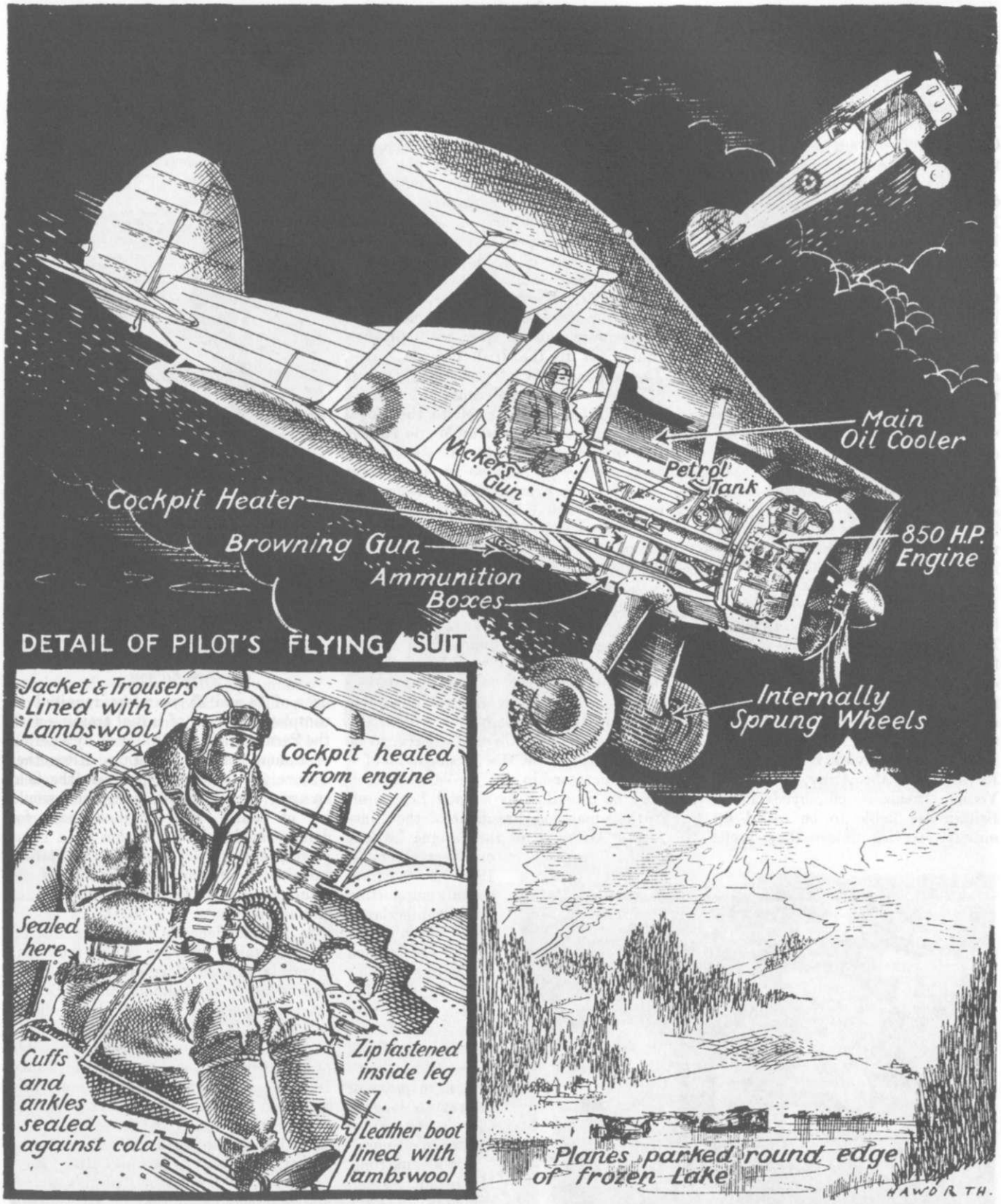
Next day the unequal combat continued, but by night only one Gladiator remained serviceable. When the inevitable withdrawal came, the vessel that took the officers and men away was bombed continuously for six hours.

Squadron-Leader John William Donaldson, who led the Gladiators, was awarded the D.S.O. Flight-Lieutenant Randolph Stuart Mills, one of the flight commanders, received the Distinguished Flying Cross. Two Pilot Officers also were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for their share in the exploit, and a Sergeant received the Military Medal.



In a fjord near Tromso snow and ice coated the deck of H.M. Aircraft Carrier "Furious" (above), making conditions exceedingly difficult. Flt.-Lieut. R. S. Mills (right) was awarded the D.F.C., and Sqdn.-Ldr. J. W. Donaldson (left) the D.S.O. for their services in Norway.
Photos, "Daily Mail" and Lafayette

Picture-Diagram of the Gloster Gladiator Fighter



As the Secretary of State for Air announced in the House of Commons in the famous debate of May 8, 1940, a squadron of Gloster Gladiator fighters was dispatched to Norway in an attempt to check the German air power. These machines are not so fast as the Hurricanes and Spitfires, but are extremely manoeuvrable. In fact, the Gladiator, besides being the finest biplane ever produced, is probably one of the most useful all-round machines. Of all our machines it is the best suited to withstand the cold and rough usage on an expedition of this kind.

Engine and Performance

Powered with an 850-h.p. British Mercury IX air-cooled radial engine, the 'plane develops a maximum speed of 250 m.p.h. at 15,500 ft., with a service ceiling of 32,800 ft. The Gladiator takes less than six minutes to climb to 15,000 feet. The low landing speed of 63 m.p.h., and the brakes on the wheels, makes it comparatively easy to land the 'plane on restricted ground as shown in page 554.

Characteristics of the 'Plane

The cockpit is heated and together with the latest type of lined leather flying suits—which have often proved too hot over here—gives the pilot a chance to combat the harsh cold weather of the north. The fact that the Finnish air force used Gladiators for some time is further proof that they are capable of standing up to the job.

Specially drawn for THE WAR ILLUSTRATED *by Haworth*

Of the British Family Only Eire Is Not at War

Alone of the States comprising the British Commonwealth of Nations, Eire (or the Irish Free State as it used to be called) is not at war with Germany. In this article some little-known facts are given of Eire's present attitude and the state of her defences.

In war, as in peace, Ireland is a country divided against itself. Six counties—Northern Ireland, that is—have joined in the fight against Nazi Germany; the twenty-six counties that make up Eire are neutral.

Shortly before the outbreak of war the German Minister in Dublin, Dr. Eduard Hempel, assured Mr. de Valera, Eire's Prime Minister and Minister for External Affairs, that if Germany should be involved in a European war the German Government would respect Eire's neutrality, and Mr. de Valera in reply informed Dr. Hempel that his Government wished to remain at peace with Germany as with all other powers. Thus it happens that there is still a German Legation in Dublin—No. 58, Northumberland Road—above whose portico is flown the swastika flag of the Nazi Reich.

In Northern Ireland—Ulster, as it is sometimes but not quite accurately styled—the war is being prosecuted with full vigour. There is no conscription, but recruiting for the British armed forces is active, particularly for the two regiments, the Royal Ulster Rifles and the Royal Irish Fusiliers, who have their headquarters in Northern Ireland. In Eire, on the other hand, no British uniforms are allowed to appear in the streets and no recruiting for the British armed forces is officially permitted—although no difficulties are placed in the way of the young men of Eire who cross the Irish Sea with a view to enlisting in the Royal Navy, the Army, or the R.A.F. Young Irishmen employed in Great Britain are liable to be called up for military service unless they prefer to return to Eire—which, we are told, many of them have done.

In the last war Ireland was garrisoned by a large army of British troops, who had to face not only the threat of a possible German invasion, but the ever-present likelihood of a Sinn Fein rising. Moreover, the Irish ports and harbours—in particular, Berehaven, Lough Swilly, and Queenstown (now styled Cobh)—were made great use of by ships of the Royal Navy. Since 1921, however, there has been no British army in Eire, and in 1938 even the three naval bases mentioned above were handed over with all their equipment to the Irish defence forces. The responsibility of preventing the use of Irish waters by German submarines, which in the last war fell to the Royal Navy, has now devolved on Mr. de Valera; and in accordance with the strict letter of neutrality it may be presumed that British soldiers, sailors, and airmen who land on the soil of Eire face the likelihood of internment.

But while resolved to maintain her neutrality—an evidence of this resolve is the fact that Dublin has no black-out—Eire cannot be described as being pro-German. There is still in the country an intransigent element represented by the Irish Republican Army, which today, as for many years past, regards England as *the* enemy; but the Irish people as a whole are too strict in their Catholicism, and too sincere in their love of liberty, to be much affected by the propaganda of a pagan dictatorship. Mr. de Valera himself may be described as a good League-of-Nations-man; as President of the Nineteenth Assembly of the League he sent on September 27, 1938 a telegram warmly supporting Mr. Chamberlain's peace effort on the eve of the Munich Conference. For him, as for Sinn Fein generally, there can be no question of full cooperation with Britain in peace or in war so long as the partition of Ireland continues.

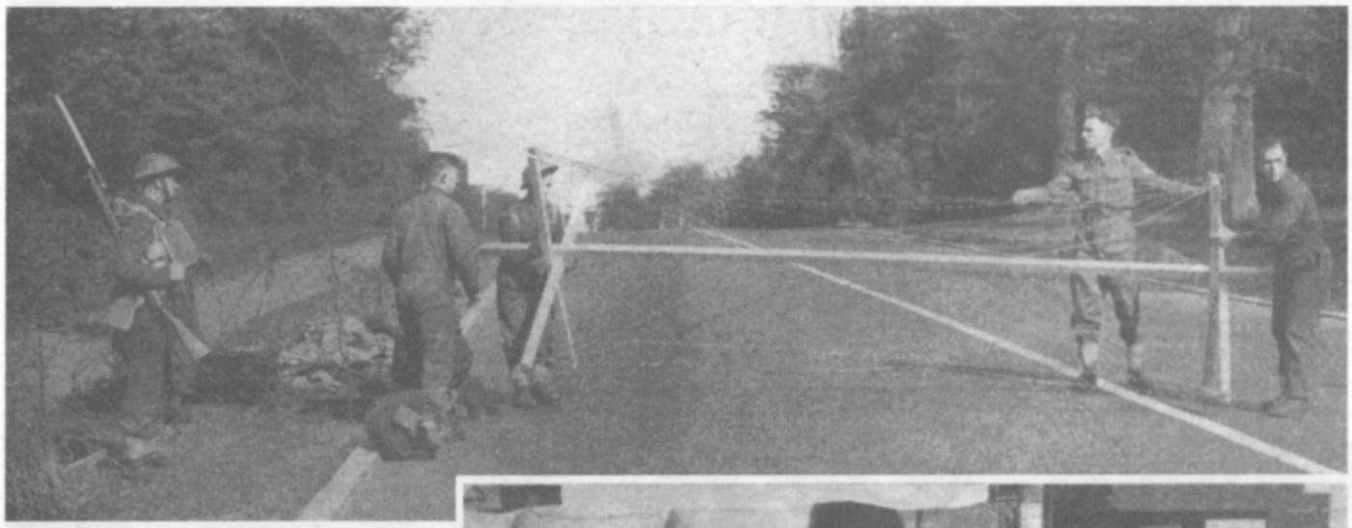
At the same time, Mr. de Valera would probably be the first to admit that if the Royal Navy were severely crippled Ireland could not long continue to be that "sovereign independent democratic state" which its constitution affirms it to be. Eire's Permanent Defence Force consists of 598 officers and 5,500 N.C.O.s and men with a reserve of 234 officers, 5,750 N.C.O.s and men, and a Volunteer Force of 300 officers and 15,000 N.C.O.s and men. All men between the ages of 18 and 25 years are required to complete a period of initial training with the Permanent Force, followed by a period of annual training in camp. Altogether Eire might be able to put into the field an army of some 40,000 men, which would be, of course, entirely inadequate for defence against any invasion by a great power, and might seem to be hardly sufficient to prevent the utilization of the country's coasts by enemy submarines and aeroplanes.

Eire uses high-speed motor torpedo boats to defend her territorial waters. This sailor salutes the green, white and gold flag of a new boat.
Photo, Keystone

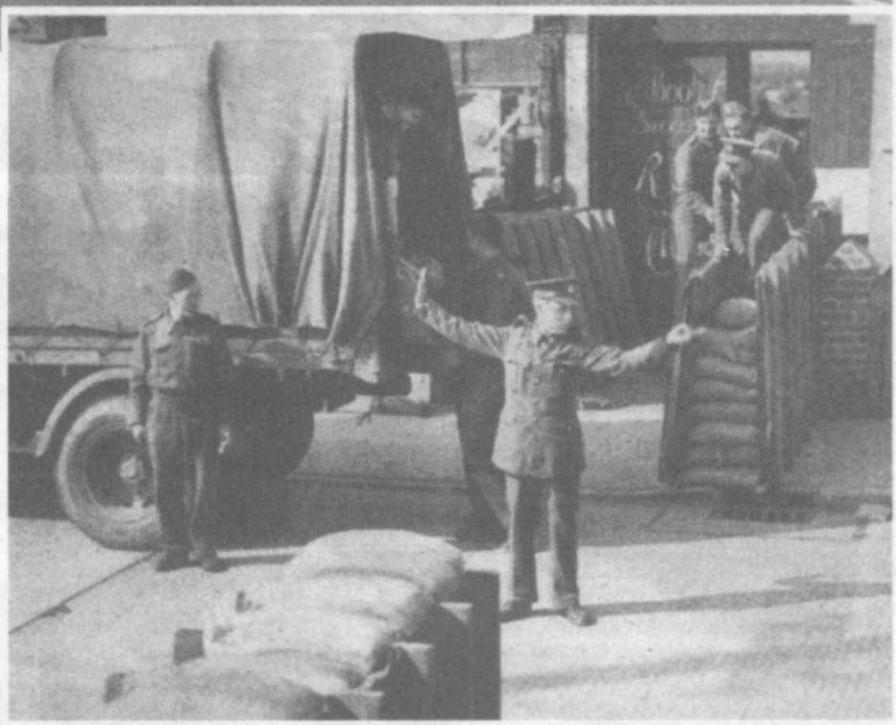
If Ireland depends for her protection upon Britain's navy, it is also true that a very large percentage of her population depend for their livelihood on the British market. In spite of Mr. de Valera's efforts to make Eire largely self-supporting and to give as much employment as possible of a varied character to the Irish people, Ireland and Britain are, economically speaking, mutually dependent. As the war goes on, Irish cattle-breeders and dairy-farmers hope that, to an ever larger extent, Irish meat, bacon, butter, eggs, and cheese will appear on Britain's tables; and it is significant that on the morrow of Germany's invasion of Denmark a trade delegation led by Mr. Lemass, Minister for Supplies, and Dr. Ryan, Minister for Agriculture, was dispatched to open conversations with a view to enabling Eire to fulfil many of the orders that previously went to Denmark.

The small but efficient Irish army holds manoeuvres every summer, sometimes in the mountains of the west or, as in this case, on the central plain. These men in drab green uniforms and German-type steel helmets are testing a field telephone.
Photo, Keystone

Preparing a Hot Reception for Any Parachutists



BRITAIN took immediate and vigorous steps to meet the possibility of invasion from the air. Though this method had been foreseen, some surprise was occasioned by the large scale on which it was carried out in Holland and Belgium by the Nazis, and by the measure of success which attended it. The British Government was determined that little opportunity should be presented to the enemy, and long-planned measures were put into force at once. A closer watch than ever was kept by the Observer Corps, while, on the other hand, the activities of possible "Fifth Columnists" were discounted by a speedy rounding-up in the eastern and south-eastern counties of enemy aliens. Then on May 14 Mr. Anthony Eden, Minister for War, issued an appeal for Local Defence Volunteers —which met with an overwhelming response.



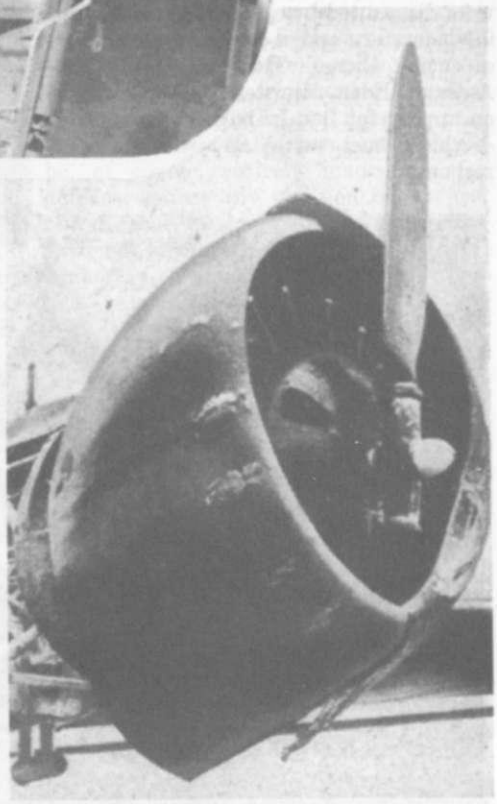
The two photographs above show the method adopted in Britain to stop traffic at control posts. On the open roads cars are faced with such an obstacle as that seen at top. In the lower photograph (taken in a small town) sandbag walls block the pavements.

Though enemy parachutists after landing would probably make their way on foot nothing is left to chance, and in small towns and villages as well as on open roads a rigorous examination of all traffic takes place. Left, sandbags and a farm wagon have been successfully disposed in a village street to bring traffic down to a snail's pace. Right, soldiers are examining a motorist's licence and identity card.

These Nazis Know What Our A.A. Guns Can Do!

Nazi bombing-'planes diving down to drop their bombs on British destroyers at Aalesund, Norway, met with severe anti-aircraft fire. One bomber (right) crashed on the coast, a tangled mass of wreckage beyond all recognition. Below is a photograph of the fuselage of a Junkers bomber pierced by a direct hit from one of our anti-aircraft guns. This is a comparatively infrequent occurrence, splinters from the bursting shell usually doing sufficient damage.

This Junkers JU 87 dive-bomber (left) had its tail fin almost entirely shot away by our anti-aircraft fire. Luckily for the two Nazi occupants of the 'plane, the tail fin is not absolutely essential, and they managed to make a safe landing. At the same time, the instability of the machine resulting from this damage might easily have meant their end.



Often do we read in the news bulletins that an enemy machine has been hit by anti-aircraft gun fire, and here in this page we have ocular proof—supplied, be it noted, by the cameras of the Nazis themselves—that Britain's gunners aim straight and shoot to excellent purpose. The two lower photographs show a Nazi 'plane just arrived back at its base, and (right) the port engine of a Junkers bomber which was so badly damaged by our fire that it had to limp home on one engine.

Photos, Associated Press and Planet News

I Saw Fighting, But No Panic, In Amsterdam

"Every cross-road and street was a battleground," said Mr. H. Smith, after an unpleasantly adventurous journey to the river at Amsterdam. This and the English dancer's story that follows make up a complete little picture of the modern invader's methods.

A MAN and his wife with their two-year-old son, Mr. and Mrs. H. Smith, of Southend, who lived near the Schiphol aerodrome, Amsterdam, had a series of narrow escapes.

"Early on Friday morning we heard aircraft and then the bombs began to drop and the guns to roar.

"We knew there was only one thing for it—to get out. We dressed and my wife put on a dozen eggs to boil while I got the car. Sixteen German 'planes flew ahead, dropping salvos of bombs till the place shook and the roar of anti-aircraft guns was like hell let loose.

"We waited no longer. We left our house—and the eggs—and made for the River Maas in our car. We went into the country and the Germans were over again bombing furiously.

"Then we saw eight Heinkels, some bombing, and after them a number of enormous 'planes, and from them the parachutists began to fall.

"They were dropping like flies and we made a detour deep into the country and away again. It was just a case of go while it was clear; stop when we saw the 'planes; wait for the bombs, and then on again.

"I can't remember much more, but at last we got to the river and the town was full of Nazis and Dutch troops fighting fiercely. We ran and dropped down every time the fighting broke out.

"Every street and cross-road seemed to be a battleground, but at last we got to the waterside and on the ship, and then the bombers came again and again, but by now the Dutch were hitting back.

"They did not panic. I saw them crying, but they were tears of rage and not terror. Do not be misled, the Dutch are not despairing; they have got past that. I have not seen a man nor a woman nor a child who does not understand that the only thing left is to fight to the very death.

"When we got on board the ship we were told that the Germans held one bank and the Dutch the other. The ship was going to try to get through. We could go or stay. We stayed.

"Opposite us a Dutch ship with one gun was firing at the waves of bombers. A Dutch liner was ablaze. Then we set off. It was night now and the bombing and gunning were maddening. A Heinkel flew ahead of the ship as we passed down the river.

"We have nothing but the clothes we stand in."—("*News Chronicle*" *and* "*Daily Telegraph.*")

MISS RONA RICCARDO, an English acrobatic dancer, whose fiancé is a pilot in the Dutch Air Force, stationed at Waalhaven, Rotterdam's airport, said: "We saw the parachute troops drop. Some of them had boats, some bicycles.

Miss Rona Riccardo, an English acrobatic dancer, whose experiences are told below. She is holding part of a Nazi parachute.
Photo, Black Star

All had guns. We saw some racing along over the Maas Bridge on their cycles. They were in Dutch uniforms, but you could tell they were foreigners because they stopped at every street corner and looked at the names of the roads.

"On the bridge—we had to cross it twice—we saw the 'planes swoop down with their machine-guns going. There were children still playing on the bridge, women walking about—but the Germans didn't stop.

"We were told that we should be escorted from the Hook—about half-an-hour away; but we in our cabin reconciled ourselves to die. We were given a tot of gin. We called it 'Dutch courage,' although there was practically no panic. That was one of the things that staggered us; the lack of panic, even the lack of realisation that war had come.

"The Dutch people just stayed out in the streets looking at 30 or 40 men dropping out of the sky. They didn't even get under cover when the bombs began to drop, and took no notice though all the sirens were screaming.

"'Planes were circling over us all the time. We saw one aeroplane come down and a body fall out of it without a parachute. As darkness fell we started."—("*News Chronicle.*")

Devastation wrought by the Nazi bombing attack on Schiphol Aerodrome, Amsterdam, on May 18. Dense clouds of smoke are rising from the burning buildings. Another picture is printed in page 560.
Photo, Associated Press

I WAS THERE!

How We Escaped Bombers and Parachutists

British refugees who escaped from Holland in the first two or three days of the invasion had amazing stories to tell of the Nazi sky troops and of bombing escapes. All were agreed on the grim determination of the Dutch to fight against all odds.

MR. RICHARD GLENN, who was in Amsterdam, gave a particularly vivid account.

"'The Germans are here!' That was the startling ejaculation that roused me abruptly from my sound sleep in an Amsterdam boarding-house on Friday morning. It was just half-past seven, and I stared uncomprehendingly at my landlady.

"A stout, motherly woman, she stood there wild-eyed, white and panting with excitement. 'They've invaded Holland,' she cried. 'You had better get to safety. Bombs are dropping everywhere. I don't know what is going to become of us.'

"There were large numbers of people who had not believed for a moment that the Germans would invade Holland, and I was certainly one of them.

"Now, however, all was changed, and very rapidly I found the position extremely serious. There were rumours of all kinds of disaster as I made my way to the British Consulate.

"The theory of the people of Amsterdam was that the Germans intended to use as an aerodrome a flat, solid piece of ground that is part of the reclamation scheme about twelve miles from the city. With this object they dropped parachute troops who would hope to join up later with the larger forces landed elsewhere.

"Stories as to the successes achieved were conflicting, but the suggestion that many of these troops were dead before they reached the ground was borne out when I saw two such victims at a later period.

"They had landed dead on the edge of the Zuyder Zee, with their feet in the water and the canopy of their parachute stretched over the land. These men wore Dutch uniforms and were well armed. They also carried field-glasses.

"One of the most striking features of the situation was the manner in which the citizens as a whole strove to maintain calm. All of the shops remained open.

"In the midst of these happenings I devoted myself to getting away. I was extremely fortunate to get the last available place in a ship leaving for England.

"We had a very thrilling journey across the North Sea, and as we left Holland we could see buildings burning furiously at various points."

Some of the staff of the British Consulate at Rotterdam escaped as firing went on.

A secretary, Miss H. L. Coates, gave the following account:

"The Consulate is in a tough spot right by the Maas Bridge. The children of the caretaker were among those who escaped, but there are still some children left. The German 'planes flew so low that they were able to fire bullets through the Consulate windows."

Another British passenger from Rotterdam said: "It was just hell. The German fighters were buzzing around like mosquitoes. The bombers were as low as sixty feet."—("*Daily Telegraph.*")

Our Captain Was the Last Off the 'Afridi'

The destroyer "Afridi," the sloop "Bittern" and the French destroyer "Bison" were sunk by Nazi air attacks off the coast of Norway on May 3 while escorting troopships. Here are vivid descriptions of the scene by an eye-witness and by a member of the "Afridi's" crew.

LT.-COL. C. J. ROBINS, commanding the first British battalion to land at Namsos and the last to leave, saw the bombing and sinking both of the French destroyer "Bison" and the British destroyer "Afridi."

The Germans launched a terrific aerial attack by single-engined dive-bomber Heinkels on the convoy on May 3, when the "Afridi" was well in the rear. "Bison" sustained a direct hit and began at once to sink. The "Afridi" raced to her aid and stood by in the rain of fire.

"We were able to take off some sixty of the crew," said Col. Robins. "Twenty-five of them were badly burnt and injured." The "Bison" then sank.

"The 'Afridi' now put on full speed to catch up the rest of the convoy, and two and a half hours later another raiding unit droned overhead and dived. The 'Afridi' was hit by two bombs; her bridge was narrowly missed.

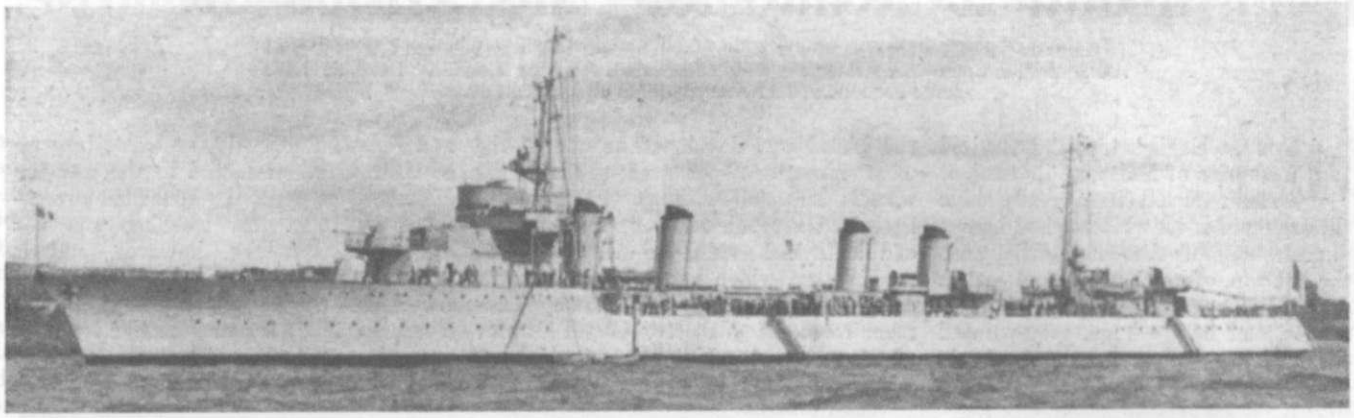
"The explosion blew out the sides of the destroyer, and only her watertight doors prevented her from sinking at once. Some troops and sailors were able to jump out of the holes made by the explosion in the sides.

"Officers and men of the 'Afridi' and soldiers who were aft during the attack had lucky escapes. They rushed forward with the rest of the crew and got off all the French wounded that had not been killed by the explosion; also all our own wounded men that we could get out.

This photograph shows an aspect of the Nazi attack on the Low Countries—wrecked and blazing houses near the Schiphol aerodrome at Amsterdam. On May 10, soon after 4 a.m., a furious aerial battle was fought high above Schiphol, between the defending fighter 'planes and Nazi bombers, but the enemy was able to wreak destruction on the streets near the aerodrome.

Photo, Associated Press

I WAS THERE!



The French destroyer "Bison" which, in company with H.M.S. "Afridi" and the Polish "Grom," convoyed Allied troops from Norway, was sunk by German bombers in the North Sea on May 6. She was the first French warship to be lost by enemy action since the outbreak of war. The "Bison" was completed in 1930. Her tonnage was 2,436 and she carried a complement of 209 officers and men. The "Bison's" maximum speed was 40 knots.
Photos, Topical, Associated Press, Fox, Vicary and News Chronicle

"H.M.S. 'Griffin' and 'Imperial' came skilfully alongside the sinking 'Afridi,' which went down in forty minutes. They took off all the survivors including the French who had been through this double experience."

Another eye-witness said that as boats put out to save the "Afridi's" men, some of them wounded, struggling in thick patches of oil on the water, the German fliers skimmed the sea, swept it with machine-gun fire. Then they dropped incendiary bombs into the oil, watched it roar in flames up into the sky.

Here is the story of one of the "Afridi's" crew:

"Three Germans came over. Two of them flew on one side to attract our fire, the other came right down to unload his bombs. He missed us with two. Another was luckier. We began to list at once.

"I was in the range-finder up above the bridge. The explosion shot me into the air.

"The next thing I remember is a fellow rubbing the back of my neck, saying, 'Come on, old son, you're not dead yet.' I was surprised I had only a bruised leg.

"The explosion shattered the bridge pretty badly. But practically nobody up there was hurt, except for cuts and bruises.

"Captain Vian—the 'Altmark' man, you remember—just leaned over the side of what was left of the bridge, and in that quiet way he has said, 'Now then, lads.'

"That was all. It was like a tonic. Some of us went below to do what we could to get hold of the lads down there.

"Our captain is a great man, cool as you like. He was the last one off. You'd have thought he was scrambling over his garden fence at home, the way he did it.

"The rescue business was difficult because we were still being attacked by the Jerries. And they still came on even after we had been saved.

"The captain had left the 'Afridi' only a few minutes when she came right up out of the water and went down."—("*Daily Telegraph*" *and* "*Daily Express.*")

Survivors of H.M.S. "Afridi" showed no signs of their ordeal and their attitude is summed up by the man on the left. Next to him, Leading Signalman Scarlett gives a light to Seaman Clifford Harey. The next man, Signalman Newson, though wounded, has not lost his appetite. Extreme right is the father of the "Afridi's" crew, a Leading Seaman Gunner, 54 years old. Above right, a survivor brings home skis as a memento.

Malta Is Ready for Any Onslaught

In times of peace, half-war, and war alike Malta, almost half way between Gibraltar and Alexandria, is one of the strategic centres of Britain's far-flung Empire. Here we have some account of its history, people and present state.

MANY an English tourist has vivid memories of Malta, of its ancient walls reflected in a really blue Mediterranean, of its whitewashed houses with their flat roofs throwing off the glare of the hot sun, of its churches and castles recalling the colourful history of many centuries, and of the huge, grey-painted battleships at anchor in the harbour. Even after the war began Malta had not thrown off its face of peacetime gaiety. There was no black-out in the island, the shops were open until midnight, and the theatres played to full houses. Living was cheap, petrol was plentiful, and beer was only 4d. a pint. Now, however, Malta is blacked out, its sky is filled with roaring 'planes, and war sets the note of all its activities.

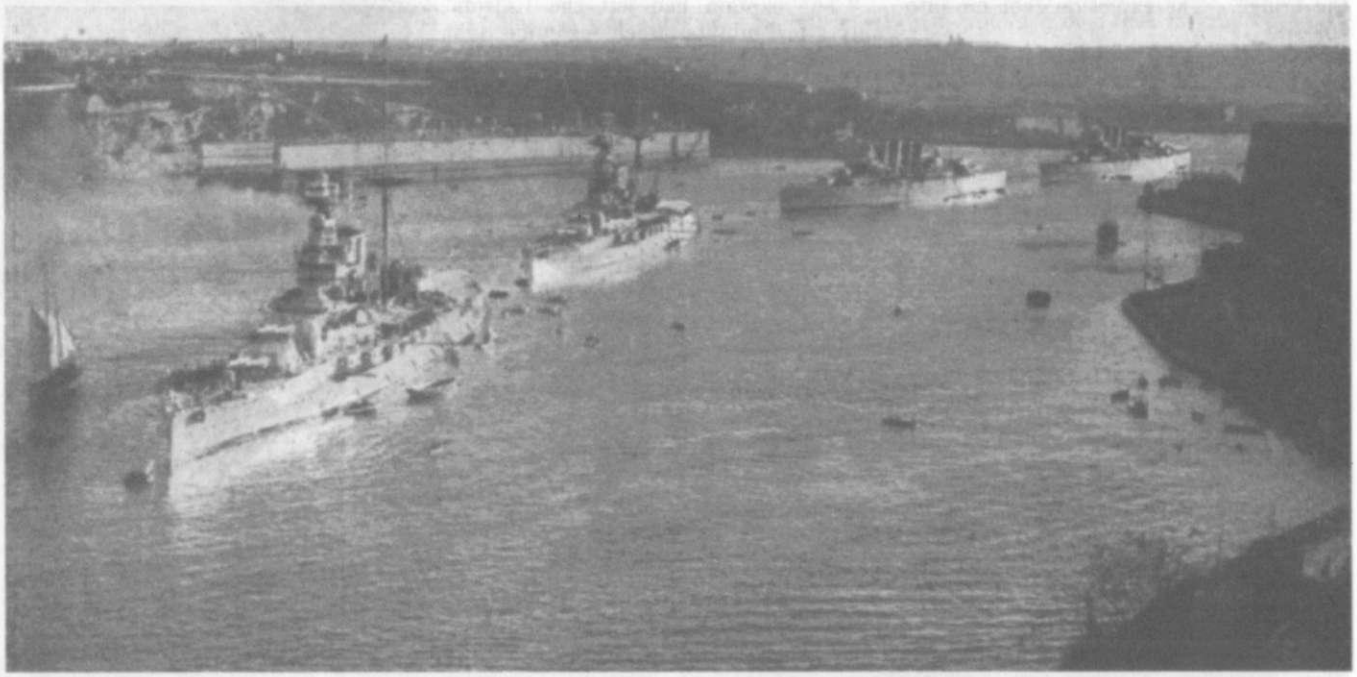
It lies almost exactly in the centre of the Mediterranean, this little island which is the headquarters of the British Fleet and of the R.A.F. in the Mediterranean, and a stronghold of British imperial power. In its history of more than 2,500 years it has been held in turn by Phoenicians, Greeks, Carthaginians, Romans, Arabs, and the Knights of St. John, who ruled it from 1530 until they were dispossessed by Napoleon in 1798. Later in that same year Nelson blockaded the island, and Malta was officially annexed to the British Crown by the Treaty of Paris in 1814.

Following the Crimean War the military defences were greatly strengthened and the island was developed as one of the most important ports of call for the world's shipping and as the principal base for the repair and refitment of ships of the Royal Navy in the Mediterranean. At Valletta, which has been the island's capital since 1570—its name commemorates La Vallette, Grand Master of the conquering Knights of St. John—are great dock and victualling yards spread over the shores of two arms of the harbour known as "Dockyard" and "French" creeks, and there are also hospitals, magazines and storehouses.

Malta itself is some 17 miles long, with an area of 95 square miles. Included with it are the island of Gozo (26 square miles) and the islet of Comino, which lies between the two—making a total of 122 square miles. The population is estimated at about 275,000, mainly of Phoenician or Carthaginian descent and of the Roman Catholic faith. Both English and Maltese are official languages, the former being the official language of the administration, while since 1934 Maltese has taken the place of Italian as the principal language of the courts of law.

Many thousands of the Maltese are employed in the dockyards and arsenals, and during the Great War they provided a garrison for the island as well as many seamen for men-of-war and minesweepers and labourers for the pioneer battalions that did such good service at Gallipoli and Salonika. Partly, at least, because of their excellent record in the war the Maltese were granted responsible government in 1921. Its working was not entirely satisfactory, however, and it was revoked in 1936, when the island reverted to the status of a Crown Colony. Then, in 1939, a new constitution was promulgated by the Governor, General Sir Charles Bonham-Carter, under which there is a Council of Government composed of eight official members and two unofficial members nominated by the Governor, and ten elected members. The elections for the ten elective seats took place in July 1939 and the result gave six seats to the Constitutional Party of Lord Strickland, three to the National Opposition led by Sir Ugo Mifsud, while the remaining seat was won by the Labour Party. Over 75 per cent of the electorate—to be exact, 32,226—voted.

In this war as in the last, Malta is one of the Empire's principal strategic centres, and the Maltese, too, are living up to their well-deserved reputation. Many of them have enlisted in the King's Own Malta Regiment, and on May 5 the first Maltese unit to leave for active service overseas was inspected by Major-General Dobbie, Acting Governor of the island, who read a message from the Governor, in which he expressed his confidence that the troops would uphold and enhance the high reputation which the regiment had already earned for zeal and efficiency.

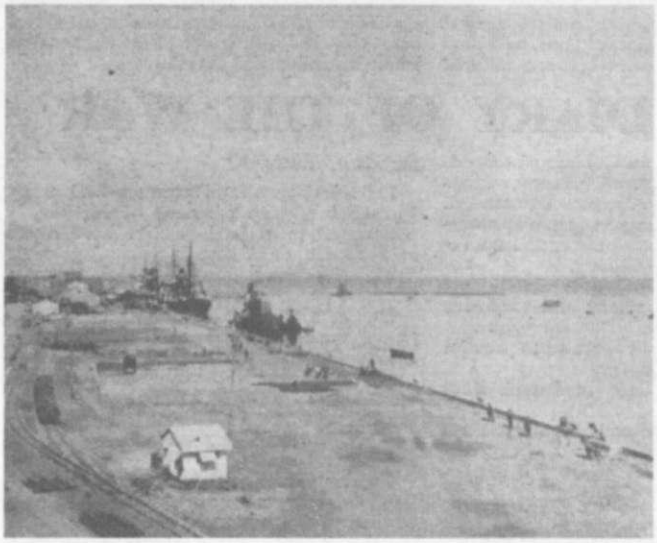


The Grand Harbour of Valletta is one of the two great British naval bases in the Mediterranean, the other being Gibraltar. Moored in the harbour we see two battleships of the "Royal Sovereign" class and two cruisers. Some of the fortifications which still stand were originally built by the Moors, but there are now new and very formidable defences, and Malta is also an important air base.

Photo, Charles E. Brown

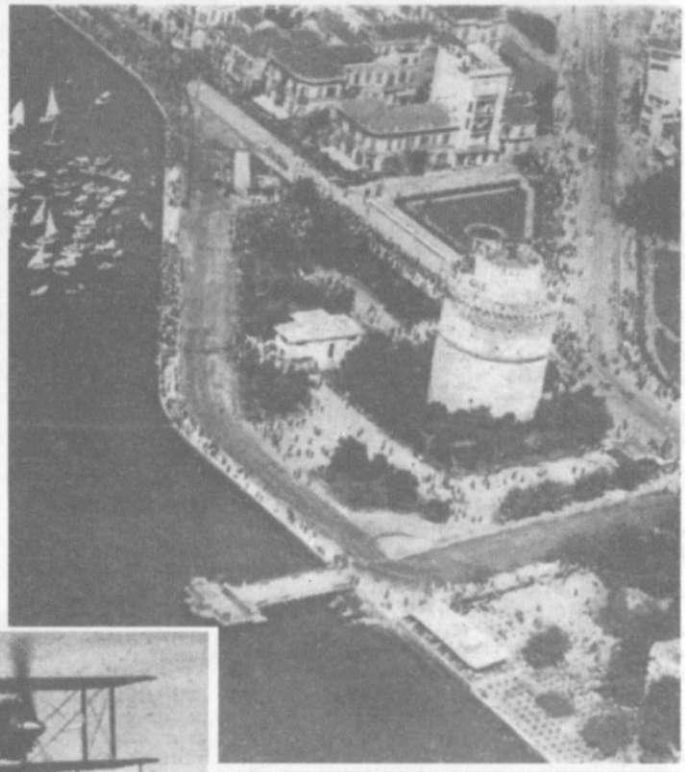
Strongholds of Allied Power in the Mediterranean

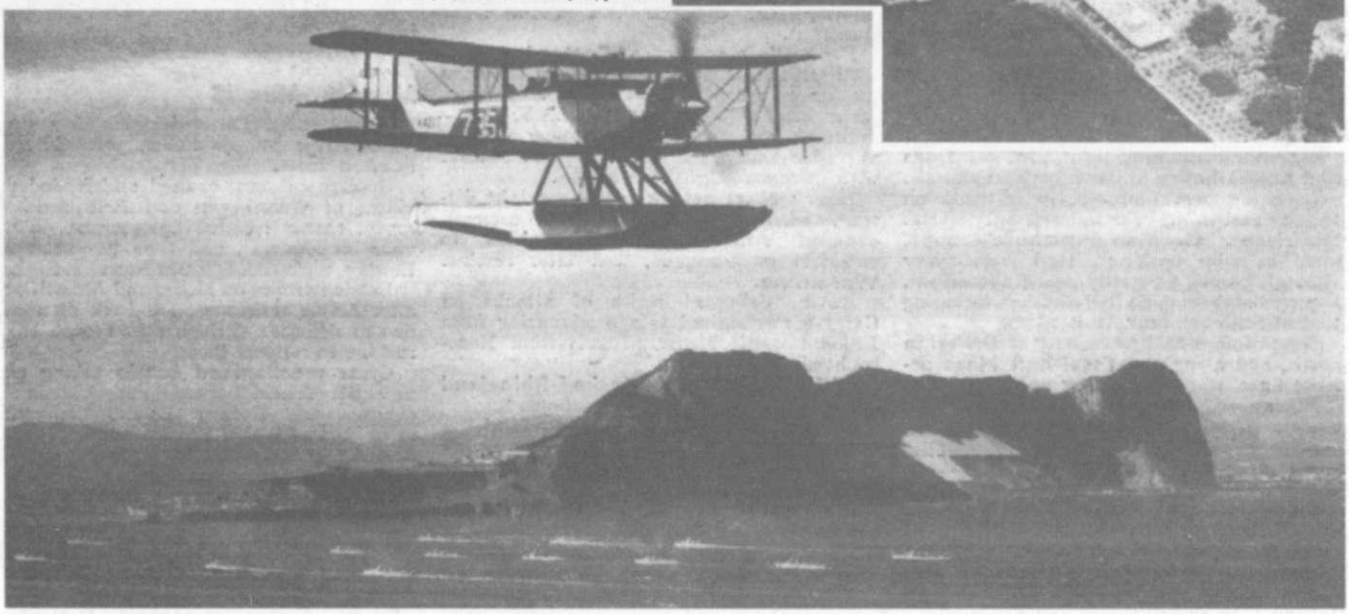
On May 3, 1940, the first ships of the reinforced Allied fleet, the most powerful that has ever entered the Mediterranean, steamed into the harbour of Alexandria, above. Alexandria is both a great commercial port and a naval base. Here a cruiser of the "County" class is seen in the foreground with light cruisers and destroyers, and many merchant ships in the background.



Cyprus, in the extreme east of the Mediterranean, is a key position. The harbour of Famagusta, above, was built early in this century, but has recently been enlarged. It is here seen after the enlargement in 1933.

Courtesy of Government of Cyprus





The most important of the keys to the Mediterranean is Gibraltar, the great rocky mass of which is seen above. In the foreground destroyers are steaming towards the harbour (see also photographs in pages 86 and 119). Salonika (above, right) is a strategical point in relation to the Balkans. During the last war it was turned into a vast armed camp by the British and French and the harbour was improved.

Photos, Charles E. Brown and Wide World

HISTORIC WORDS

Extracted from Authoritative War Speeches and Statements

(Continued from page 536)

Friday, May 10, 1940

M. Spaak, Belgian Foreign Minister, in an Appeal to the British and French Ambassadors to Belgium:

The Belgian Government regrets to have to inform the French and British Governments that Belgian territory has just been invaded by German troops, notwithstanding the pact signed by the German Government on December 13, 1937, which was reaffirmed at the beginning of the present hostilities.

The Belgian Government has decided to resist with all its power the aggression of which the country has just become a victim. It appeals to the French and British Governments so that the help provided for in the treaties and confirmed in the common agreement of April 24, 1937, should be granted to Belgium without any delay.

The Belgian Government is also convinced that France and Britain will also be willing to renew the assurances previously made on February 14, 1916, assurances which also apply to the Belgian Congo.

As a result of the letters of the British Ambassador of December 19, 1914, and April 29, 1916, as well as of the declaration of the French Government of April 19, 1916, the Belgian Government is perfectly confident that as in the past the combined efforts of France, Britain and Belgium will assure the victory of right.

The Belgian Government would be glad to receive from the French Government and the Government of the United Kingdom a reply as soon as possible.

Queen Wilhelmina, in a Proclamation to the Dutch people:

After our country, with scrupulous conscientiousness, had observed strict neutrality during all these months, and while Holland had no other plan than to maintain this attitude, Germany last night made a sudden attack on our territory without warning.

This was done notwithstanding the solemn promise that the neutrality of our country would be respected as long as we ourselves maintained that neutrality.

I herewith make a flaming protest against this unprecedented violation of good faith and violation of all that is decent between cultured States. I and my Government will also do our duty now.

Do your duty everywhere and in all circumstances. Everyone to the post to which he is appointed, with the utmost vigilance and with that inner calmness and strong-heartedness which a clear conscience gives.

Mr. Chamberlain in a broadcast after his resignation of the Premiership:

Early this morning, without warning or excuse, Hitler added another to the horrible crimes which already disgrace his name by a sudden attack on Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg. In all history no other man has been responsible for such a hideous toll of human suffering and misery as he.

He has chosen a moment when perhaps it seemed to him that this country was entangled in the throes of a political crisis, and when he might find it divided against itself. If he has counted on our internal divisions to help him, he has miscalculated the minds of this people. . . .

The hour has come when we are to be put to the test, as the innocent people of Holland and Belgium and France are being tested already and you and I must rally behind our new leader, and with our united strength and with unshakable courage fight and work until this wild beast that has sprung out of his lair upon us is finally disarmed and overthrown.

OUR DIARY OF THE WAR

Wednesday, May 8, 1940

In both Houses of Parliament Government was criticized for conduct of Norwegian campaign. In the Commons the Opposition challenged a division, which resulted in Government majority of 81.

Admiralty announced loss of six naval trawlers through enemy air attack off Norwegian coast: "Warwickshire," "Cape Chelyuskin," "Jardine," "St. Goran," "Gaul" and "Aston Villa."

Swedish steamer "Monark," manned by German prize crew, reported torpedoed after due warning by British submarine on May 4.

Thursday, May 9

Germans retreating north and north-east of **Narvik** before Allied and Norwegian pressure.

R.A.F. fighters shot down two German aeroplanes off North-East Scotland.

Late at night **Dutch Government** ordered closing of all canal locks in **Amsterdam** area. All telephone and teleprinter communications cut off.

Dutch trawler "Gloria" presumed lost.

Swedish steamer "Haga" reported mined.

Friday, May 10

Germany invaded Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg at dawn by land and air.

Large numbers of aircraft landed troops on Dutch coast in unsuccessful attempt to seize The Hague. **German parachute troops,** some in false uniforms, landed at many strategic points, especially near **Rotterdam.** Enemy bombers raided aerodromes, including that at Schiphol, near Amsterdam.

Dutch forces held the enemy at Delfzyl in north, and along the **Yssel and Maas** defence lines, where they blew up the bridges.

Enemy crossed Belgian frontier at four points. Bombing raids on many towns, including Brussels and Antwerp. Parachute troops dropped. Sharp fighting in Luxembourg.

Allied troops crossed into Belgium along front from North Sea to Moselle.

R.A.F. made attacks on troop-carrying aircraft near Rotterdam and The Hague; against aerodromes occupied by enemy in Holland; on enemy troops and communications, and on German bomber squadrons.

Luxembourg Government crossed into Belgium.

Many French towns and villages bombed, including Béthune, Dunkirk, Nancy, Calais and Lyons. R.A.F. aerodromes also raided.

Mr. Chamberlain resigned from Premiership. **Mr. Churchill** accepted it and undertook to form Coalition Ministry.

Enemy raiders appeared over South-East Coast. Forty-four incendiary and explosive bombs dropped in Kent. Damage slight.

British troops landed in **Iceland** to prevent Germany seizing the country.

State of siege proclaimed in **Dutch East Indies.**

German troopship mined in the Sound while returning from Oslo.

Saturday, May 11

Waves of German 'planes continued to land troops by parachute in Holland and Belgium. Most said to have been killed or captured.

Dutch High Command admitted that **enemy** had **crossed the Yssel near Arnhem.**

Big battle in progress at **Rotterdam.**

All Dutch aerodromes seized by Germans recaptured except Waalhaven, at Rotterdam, which was heavily bombed by R.A.F.

British and French troops now fighting alongside Dutch. French troops in contact with enemy west of the **Moselle.**

Heavy **Nazi attack** in **Maastricht** district, where enemy captured a fortress, **crossed Albert Canal,** advanced to outskirts of **Tongres,** and later reached **Waremme.**

R.A.F. delivered series of attacks on German mechanized troops advancing from Rhine towards Meuse. Roads from Maastricht also bombed.

Allied Air Forces attacked Rhineland aerodromes and railway junctions.

General mobilization in **Switzerland.**

British and French forces landed on Dutch West Indian islands of Curaçao and Aruba to safeguard important oil refineries.

Admiralty announced that Fleet Air Arm had made two further attacks on enemy at **Bergen** and obtained hits on warship, believed to be the "Bremse."

Mr. Churchill set up a **War Cabinet of five members** and began appointing new Ministers.

Anti-Allied demonstrations in **Rome** and other Italian cities.

Sunday, May 12

Dutch report that **Germans** had **crossed Meuse** in Dutch province of Limburg and penetrated into Belgium, but were repulsed at **Hasselt,** on Albert Canal.

Fierce fighting between Dutch troops and German parachutists.

During night **R.A.F.** again bombed enemy troop concentrations and military traffic **inside Germany** near Dutch frontier.

German pressure continued west of **Maastricht** and in region of **Tongres.** Enemy mechanized forces attempted to drive southwards towards eastern end of Liége-Louvain-Brussels railway.

Fighting started again on southern Luxembourg frontier. Enemy also attacked French advanced positions near Forbach.

Admiralty announced that H.M. submarine "Seal" was overdue and considered lost.

Home Secretary ordered internment of all male enemy aliens between ages of 16 and 60 in area extending down entire East Coast and along South Coast.

Dutch steamer "Van Rensselaer" mined.

Monday, May 13

Dutch forces, after delaying Germans at Yssel River for 48 hours, **withdrew to flooded zone.**

German columns crossed undefended provinces of **Groningen** and **Friesland.** In south, enemy reached **Langstraat,** in province of Brabant, and then the **Moerdyk Bridge,** main link between N. and S. Holland.

Belgian armies on Meuse and Albert Canal, after heroic resistance, fell back on second line of defence. British and French troops rushing to support them.

Great **mechanized battle** taking place near **St. Trond** between French armoured columns and German columns advancing from Maastricht, Hasselt and Tongres. Stated that 1,500 to 2,000 tanks engaged.

One Liége fort reported fallen.

Enemy brought heavy pressure to bear on **Longwy,** but was repulsed.

Dutch Royal Family arrived in London.

Tuesday, May 14

Enemy having recaptured Rotterdam, **Netherlands High Command** ordered that **fighting should cease,** except in island-province of Zeeland